

Report of the meeting of the European Poland / Ukraine Collective

27-28 October 2017

Emmaus Brat Albert, Nowy-Sacz, Poland

Participants

Willi Does, *collective representative and President of Emmaus Europe*, **Emmaus Cologne, Germany.**

Heikki Ahava, Helka Ahava, **Emmaus Helsinki, Finland.**

Clara Martel, Pascal Louvet, **Emmaus Annemasse, France.**

Bernard Dumoulin, Pierre Dubois, **EMRA, France.**

Giorgi Ghelagutashvili, **Georgian Association, Georgia.**

Jean Amblard, Solvita Fibiga, **Amis3, Latvia.**

Arija Indrikovska, Iluta Medne, **Emmaus Smiltene, Latvia.**

Herbert Bitter, Jorris De Wildt, **Emmaus Haarzuilens, Netherlands.**

Grzegorz Hadjuk, Leszek Lizon, Robert Opoka, Wojtek Chmura, **Emmaus Brat Albert, Poland.**

Zbigniew Drazkowski, **Emmaus Lublin, Poland.**

Krzysztof Serwinski, Grazyna Moskal, **Emmaus Rzeszów, Poland.**

Julia Wierzchoslawska, Orlane Messey, Rémi Girardon, **Frères Europa de Satu Mare, Romania.**

Artur Gostkowski, **Emmaus Frediksdal, Sweden.**

Oksana Kolodiy, Vasyl Holod, **Emmaus Nasha Khata, Ukraine.**

Natalia Sanotska, Oksana Buchkovska, **Emmaus Oselya, Ukraine**

Gabriela Martin, Théo Robin, **Emmaus Europe Secretariat.**

Willi Does, the Emmaus Europe president and collective representative, opened the meeting by reminding participants about the decision taken in March to re-invite several non-Emmaus associations.

The following tables list the activities, news and future prospects for the groups, and their European solidarity and transport programme requirements.

- Polish groups: page 2
- Ukrainian groups: page 4
- Non-member and trial member groups: page 6

Other matters raised when discussing the groups' news, the current European solidarity programme, and Emmaus Europe's latest news, are found at the end of the document (page 8).

Thank you once again to Emmaus Brat Albert for hosting and organising this meeting, and to the participants for their discussions over the two days!

The next meeting will be at Nasha Khata in Ukraine on 25-6 April 2018.

POLISH GROUPS

<i>Group</i>	Brat Albert	Emmaus Lublin	Emmaus Rzeszów
<i>Latest news</i>	<p><u>Nowy Sacz</u> 22 companions (one free place). Sales dropped by 15% but have stabilised. The “reason” is state benefits that enable families to buy new goods. A building is under construction to enable the group to sell in a more organised fashion. The government’s social reforms should enable the group to access more funding for its shelter and support work with the homeless.</p> <p><u>Krakow</u> 11 companions (10 free places) – a number have become independent. The group hosted companions from Spain and Italy for the first time. The carpentry workshop is working well.</p>	<p>The income-generating activity has been scaled down due to a lack of members. A reorganisation process is underway and the focus is being placed on the successful pizza restaurant.</p> <p><u>Premises</u> The group has started renting additional premises (400m²) to expand the shop. The group has identified a new plot of land (1,500m² of which 200m² is built) close to the current shop in the main street. Legal checks have been made and it would be possible to build 300m² of buildings. In order to purchase this land, the group wants to apply to the government credit fund for social enterprises (1.5% over seven years).</p>	<p>18 companions and 21-25 places available (weekly allowance: 50 zł). <u>Income-generating activity</u> Extending the shop has enabled the group to increase sales. A glass factory is supporting the group by supplying items to sell. Collections are growing and account for 2/3 of the goods sold, with the remainder being provided by the lorry loads of donated goods. This change (more goods being collected locally) has happened over the past year. <u>Partners - support</u> For food, a bakery sells the group bread at 1/5 of the retail price (saving them roughly €200 per month) and friends provide fruit and vegetables. The group cooperates with the local media in order to communicate.</p>
<i>Main activities</i>	<p><u>Nowy Sacz</u> Works with the homeless and runs a night shelter. Main companion activities: collecting, repairing and selling goods.</p>	<p>Shelter and support for women and children, people with learning difficulties, among others. Collection and sale of second-hand goods. Helping very poor people in Lublin and the surrounding area. Works with a centre for the homeless.</p>	<p>Carpentry workshops and metal sorting. Garden (since May 2016) produces vegetables for the entire year (the group preserves vegetables for winter). Henhouse. Collection and sales (including online sales).</p>
<i>Regional solidarity programme</i>	<p><u>Nowy Sacz</u> No specific needs.</p> <p><u>Krakow</u> The truck is too old and needs replacing. A 3.5 tonne/20m³ truck is needed. This will cost €10-12,000, of which some will be funded by the group.</p>	<p>In total, purchase of the plot (see above) and construction would cost €120,000. The group can self-fund (using a loan) half of the amount and wants to apply for solidarity funding for the other half (€60,000).</p>	<p>No specific needs.</p>

<i>Lorry loads</i>	Eight loads will be needed in 2018 for both communities: ornaments, crockery, utensils, sports equipment, small domestic appliances, TVs, furniture, subject to change.	11 loads were received in 2017. 15 loads are needed in 2018.	16 loads were received in 2017. 12 loads are needed in 2018.
<i>Prospects</i>	<u>Nowy Sacz</u> Complete the construction of the shop building before spring. High demand to house homeless people in the winter (20 places currently free). <u>Krakow</u> Companions will soon be arriving with winter coming.	See the solidarity programme.	Develop online sales.

Focus on Emmaus Rzeszów's financial situation

The situation is complex. Emmaus Europe decided to commission an audit in April 2017 and a review meeting brought together the leaders of Rzeszów, representatives of Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International, and Pierre Dubois, in September 2017.

Backstory

The issue arose at the March 2016 collective meeting. Nowy Sacz produced a report on the situation in mid-2016, then Pierre Dubois travelled to Poland in July 2016 to look at the accounts and see how turnover could be increased and expenditure reduced. The situation has been improving since early 2017. The community has repaid its bank loans (it has 30,000 Zł in the bank), thanks to the help of many Emmaus communities, who have converted their loans into donations or put back the repayment schedule.

The **situation remains tense but the group is recovering**. Average monthly income rose from €13,400 (2016) to €17,000 (2017).

Following Emmaus Europe's audit in 2017, Emmaus Rzeszów was asked to:

- **Expand the board**, move towards striking a balance between everyday management responsibilities and strategic governance (**and have a clear distinction between governance and management remits**), be very **transparent, and review its statutes**.
- **Check the 2013-2016 accounts and advise Emmaus Europe** in the event of any problems.
- Adopt a **development plan for 2017-2021** for repair/reuse in order to reduce the group's dependence on lorry loads of donated goods.

The 2017-2018 budgets are currently being prepared and a GA will be held in December. A meeting will be arranged in the near future to work on the 2017-2021 budget, and in line with Emmaus Europe's recommendations, the accounts documents will be sent to Pierre Dubois every month.

UKRAINIAN GROUPS

Group	Nasha Khata	Oselya
<p><i>Latest news</i></p>	<p>32 companions (of whom four are women and a child with disabilities, which is an issue with regard to the laws on education). They earn €5-10 per week and some of their expenses are covered, such as healthcare.</p> <p><u>Activities</u> The group has paid for three cataract operations. European solidarity programme savings have enabled a pay rise (for the first time) and holidays in the mountains were arranged for employees and companions (four weeks each, the legal requirement). The group travelled to Innsbruck for the 20th anniversary. Members of Innsbruck will come to Ukraine next summer to help out the group.</p> <p><u>Economic aspects</u> The group has received funding from the local council for the first time (€730 per annum). Despite everything, the economic situation in the country is difficult and the community is developing thanks to the other Emmaus groups and not the authorities. A tractor has been received from Burgundy and the companions have learned to use it.</p> <p><u>Community life</u> Changes have been made to governance. The president left after three years, an election was held in July-August 2017, and work is underway on the statutes. The roof of the building needs replacing, but time and money are in short supply. Materials have been bought. Caritas wants to help with the building work by also including a few bedrooms. Several jobs are not covered by the solidarity programme: a psychologist (€100 per month, 16 hours a week), a shop assistant (€200 per month, 40 hours a week), and a social worker (€150, 32 hours a week). These jobs have not been officially declared (income does not cover the tax to be paid). The situation is currently being regularised but will be financially complicated.</p>	<p>12 companions (compared with 25 a year ago).</p> <p><u>Social activities</u> A new support project for elderly people has been launched and is aimed at roughly 20 people (for the present time): the group hands out food and hygiene products. The shop has become a meeting place, for instance, children follow an environmental course in the premises. One sale per week has been held in the countryside since the summer.</p> <p><u>Events</u> The group took part in an event in the centre on 12 November: open air jumble sale, fashion show etc. A book has been published about Abbé Pierre and Emmaus worldwide and in Ukraine. It went on sale on 30 October in bookshops and the book is being presented in various towns and institutions.</p> <p><u>Partners</u> The group has started working on the circular economy with an environmental group: recycling is not commonplace. It is important that the group makes itself known in this sector before private sector stakeholders take over. Working with the Lviv authorities is not always easy. They are offering extra containers, but no trucks, drivers or a storage area where the containers can be emptied.</p> <p>Community life The soft furnishings workshop stopped operating two months ago, as the workload was too great. Student volunteers help with sorting once a week, but there is still not enough time to sort the clothing that arrives every day. Electrical work has been done. The two trucks are reaching the end of their working lives. Waste reception centre costs remain high.</p>

<i>Main activities</i>	Collection (clothing and furniture), repair and sale of goods. Producing wooden goods (chairs, stools etc). Farm (eight hectares). Working with Caritas.	Collects clothing in the city via 23 containers. Two shops. Shelter and support for the homeless. Weekly soup run in Lviv (+/- 100 meals). Easter breakfast and Christmas Eve meal (for roughly 500 people).
<i>Regional solidarity programme</i>	<p><u>2017</u> Well The first team that worked on the well made mistakes and the water was not suitable for drinking, but a second team has taken over. The well is 35m deep. €2,500 is still available from the projected budget (the quality of the water has enabled the group to save the cost of installing a filter). This well enables the group to be independent from another organisation, Nazareth, which was supplying it with water.</p> <p>Farming All the planned work has been done. The cereals have grown and winter work is now underway. The land is ready to be sown with wheat.</p> <p>Salaries €250 per person per month: this is slightly lower than the average wage in rural areas of Ukraine and it just covers basic needs, but saving any money is impossible.</p> <p><u>2018</u> Once again three wages for Bogdan, Oksana and Vasyl (€9,000), a minibus (€10,000) and a timber machine (€2,500, 2017 balance).</p>	<p><u>2017</u> The visit to groups in France to observe practices and procedures proved extremely useful. The group has already implemented some of the practices. However, they need more space to store and protect equipment.</p> <p>Two potential plots of land are being considered (legal checks); both are close to the current location. The aim is to buy before spring so that building work can begin then.</p> <p>More precise news needs to be sent to Emmaus Europe and Emmaus International about the next stage of the project. Comment: currently, 70% of the clothing collected is waste. Would it not be better to improve the quality rather than the quantity? On the other hand, the group cannot control the quality of donations; furthermore, a larger warehouse would enable sorting to be more efficient and maybe less waste to be generated.</p>
<i>Lorry loads</i>	The issue of sending lorry loads of donated goods to Ukraine is complex: at the present time the law does not allow the group to sell what they receive, despite the EU-Ukraine free trade agreement. Furthermore, truck	loads may not be profitable because of customs duties.
<i>Prospects</i>	The most urgent priority is to buy a wood lathe with the money saved from not having to buy filters. Is the group allowed to reallocate the funding in this way? A minibus is also needed to transport people / Emmaus Innsbruck has already promised €2-3,000 towards the €10,000 needed.	A third shop is scheduled to open. Volunteers from Emmaus La Chaux de Fonds will come to the group for one to two weeks to work in the shop. A summer camp might be arranged if groups are interested in coming. The Swedish concept of recycling textiles to make bricks could be interesting.

GUEST PARTICIPANT GROUPS: TRIAL AND NON-MEMBERS

<i>Group</i>	Emmaus Smiltene	Amis3	Georgian association
<i>Latest news</i>	<p>Eight people housed in emergency rooms. Things have gone well this year. The outcomes of the initiatives aimed at children are positive: some speak several languages, they work etc. Regarding local matters: renting premises is complex and rents are high. The financial situation is complicated and the local council has stopped supporting the group. The group must pay €1,915 rent by 31 October.</p>	<p><u>Background</u> The association was founded after Solvita spent two months in France in 2015 and discovered Emmaus. Meetings with the Emmaus groups from the Toulouse area and visits to Smiltene and Lublin were organised. The idea was to sell rather than donate in order to maintain customers' dignity. Unforeseen income has therefore been generated and has enabled the association's social work to be funded.</p>	<p>12 members The situation in the country is difficult, 130,000 people have been displaced and there are 2,500 children living on the streets of Tbilisi. <u>Social activities</u> The Friends of Emmaus Ormans funded school materials for 75 families. The local council is not very constructive and simply refers needy people to the association. <u>Income-generating activity</u> The group needs to find storage premises, a truck and the capacity to pay wages in order to effectively support the installation of containers in the city. The truck in particular is vital.</p>
<i>Main activities</i>	<p>Three target groups Elderly people who are alone, families at social risk, with children and in difficult circumstances, and the homeless. Cultural exchange programme for children from "difficult" families who stay in France with a host family for three months and learn French. At Christmas a party is held to hand out the presents sent by the Grittsby group (Sweden) for the children. Collection of clothing and furniture (no household collections).</p>	<p>Funding social support to make up for the financial failings of local councils. Professionals select those needing support (in partnership with social services and local GPs).</p>	<p>Living accommodation, a shop and setting up collection containers. The two shops account for 100% of the resources.</p>

<i>Regional solidarity programme</i>		<p>The representatives would like to work for a few months in an existing community in order to better grasp the mechanisms and issues.</p> <p>In order to structure the association, a leader needs to be appointed (roughly €10,000 per annum) and a long-term rental property needs to be found, and potentially even a building to purchase (the premises currently occupied by the group is a temporary rental).</p>	<p>The issue was raised of groups invited to attend European collective meetings and whether they could apply for solidarity programme funding. Following discussion, the participants felt it best for organisations to be <u>visited first</u>. This could happen in <u>2018, with the Regional Executive and as far as possible with groups</u> to create direct links and see how we can work with such a geographically distant group.</p>
<i>Lorry loads</i>	One load from Sweden per year.	The group relies heavily on the lorry loads, which resupply it with goods to sell, continuing in the long term.	
<i>Prospects</i>	<p>The group needs to buy its premises (the owner is willing to sell) to improve its financial stability.</p> <p>The group also needs transport because it currently uses a private car.</p> <p>The trial membership application was examined by the October RCEE and approved with a number of recommendations made: stabilise income, the economic model and governance. A Finnish group is mentoring the organisation.</p>	In the long term, the groups wants to become a committee of friends , once it has a few years of experience under its belt.	<p>The association is in contact with the French association Espoir Handicap, which is willing to collaborate with it.</p> <p>An eco-tourism project might be set up (focusing on the fact that it is one of Europe's oldest countries and is on the border between Asia and Europe).</p> <p>The desire to work with Emmaus Europe was expressed, for example by hosting European companions on eco-tourism stays.</p> <p>Containers will be placed in the centre by the council.</p>

Other matters raised during the meeting

Companion status

There has been a debate for roughly two years about companion status. It is very important to ensure that this Emmaus-specific status does not turn into exploitation in certain groups.

It is worth paying attention to the companion allowances in different countries when debating this issue.

Solidarity

In a general sense, **solidarity programme funding applications need to be more precise** (both the amounts requested and the content) **when they are presented to the collective.**

Lorry loads

The Polish groups stated that overall they no longer need textiles, which means that they turn down lorry loads of donated goods. On the other hand, the donor groups do not necessarily choose the items they receive and can therefore donate themselves. However, all the groups agreed that it is better for the **receiving groups to clearly express their needs using precise lists**, even if not everything can be supplied. The dynamic of needs being expressed and loads being shipped is worthy of interest. In light of this, the participants were asked to fuel the dynamic **by communicating effectively with the Emmaus Europe Secretariat.**

Emmaus Europe's news

The membership dues situation is very positive.

The main topics of the moment are as follows:

- **Migration**
 - Involvement of Emmaus France, Emmaus International and Emmaus Europe in the Article 13 event.
 - Letter to the institutions such as the Commission, heads of state and MEPs to denounce the approach being applied to the overhaul of the Common Asylum System, which emerged in summer 2017.
 - European counter-summit in Brussels on 12 December organised by CND 11.11.11, a member of the Migreurop network, followed by an event on 13 December to raise awareness about migration justice.
- **Circular, social and solidarity economy**
 - A poster and a booklet have been created about the solidarity economy based on the experiences of the groups in Europe. The resource has been sent to all the member groups.

Upcoming events

- **Regional Council of Emmaus Europe** in March 2018 (venue to be confirmed).
- **Regional Assembly of Emmaus Europe** in autumn 2019 (venue to be confirmed).
 - New candidates are needed for the posts of CEI (Emmaus International board members), it would be good if **they included representatives from Poland, Ukraine etc.**
 - A new president of Emmaus Europe will also need to be elected.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at **Nasha Khata, Ukraine, on 25-6 April 2018**. Make this a date for your diary!